

# Stress, Anxiety, Trauma and Mental Functioning Amidst the Pandemic of the Century

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## ABSTRACT

During an outbreak of any viral infectious disease, the psychological reactions of the population play a vital role in shaping both spread of the disease and the prevalence of emotional distress and social disorder during and after the outbreak. While this might be evident in the acute phase, when health systems prioritize testing, reducing transmission and critical patient care, psychological and psychiatric needs should not be overlooked and should be given the adequate importance. These are clearly crucial issues to consider in the management including COVID-19. Psychological reactions to pandemics include maladaptive behaviours, emotional distress and defensive responses, anxiety, stress, trauma and depressive relapses.

Both the threat and realization of loss due to the core and ancillary can be traumatic and may lead to chronic stress, depression, anxiety, and bereavement. Thus it is far to state that extreme, stress anxiety and psychiatric co morbidities that were already increasing at an alarming rate has been aggravated by COVID 19 pandemic, the dreaded pandemic of the century. Further sample based study and research is warranted.

**KEYWORDS:** Anxiety Stress Trauma COVID-19

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of any pandemic, the psychological reactions of the people play a crucial role in shaping both spread of the disease and the coping mechanism of the masses following the outbreak. In spite of this, adequate resources are typically not provided to manage or attenuate pandemics' effects on mental health and wellbeing.[1] Anxiety, depression, stress, trauma and other psychiatric illnesses should be looked into with a broader sense of view for proper functioning of the population then ultimately all the nations.

## DISCUSSION

During an outbreak of any viral infectious disease, the psychological reactions of the population play a vital role in shaping both spread of the disease and the prevalence of emotional distress and social disorder during and after the outbreak. In spite of this, adequate resources are typically not provided to manage or attenuate pandemics' effects on mental health and wellbeing.[1]

While this might be evident in the acute phase, when health systems prioritize testing, reducing transmission and critical patient care, psychological and psychiatric needs should not be overlooked and should be given the adequate importance. It is known that psychological factors play a pivoting role in

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adherence to public health measures (such as vaccination) and coping strategies with the threat of infection and consequent losses.[1] These are clearly crucial issues to consider in the management including COVID-19. Psychological reactions to pandemics include maladaptive behaviours, emotional distress and defensive responses, anxiety, stress, trauma and depressive relapses.[1] People who are prone to psychological problems and already taking treatment for psychiatric comorbidities are especially vulnerable. It should be recognized that, even in the normal course of events, people with established mental illness have a lower life expectancy and poorer physical health outcomes than the general population.[2] As a result, people with pre-existing mental health and substance use disorders will be at increased risk of infection with COVID-19, increased risk of having problems accessing testing and treatment and increased risk of negative physical and psychological effects stemming from the pandemic. There is a considerable increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms among people who do not have preexisting mental health conditions, with some experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder in due course. There is already evidence that this possibility has been under-recognized in China during the current

pandemic.[3]The World Health Organization has formally recognized this risk to healthcare workers,[4] so more needs to be done to manage anxiety and stress in this group and, in the longer term, help prevent burnout, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

From the fundamentals of basic needs to threats of disease and death to reported increased cases of domestic violence and suicide, impacts of the pandemic are bewildering. Members of the disability community are not only concerned about potential denial of care for themselves but also the potential suffering and death of family members, friends, colleagues, and others with disabilities. A lot of people with disabilities have certain primary or secondary health conditions[5]. It puts them at higher risk for severe complications or death or mental problems like anxiety and cognitive slowing if they have COVID-19 [5] Both the threat and realization of such loss can be traumatic and may lead to chronic stress, depression, anxiety, and bereavement.

Till now, we are not aware of any studies specifically examining the relationship between broad disability status and mortality from COVID-19, although more research on these topics is emerging as the pandemic progresses. In another article by Halder et al. the link between depression susceptibility and COVID 19 has been highlighted involving many biochemical and pathophysiological mechanisms. [6]

#### CONCLUSION

Thus it is fare to state that extreme, stress anxiety and psychiatric co morbidities that were already increasing at an alarming rate has been aggravated by COVID 19 pandemic, the dreaded pandemic of the century.

Further sample based study and research into this for proper diagnosis, treatment and management of mental illnesses in such context is need of the hour.

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